

EDUCATION

Community Level Goal

Improve High School Graduation Rates and Reduce Racial and Economic Disparities in Graduation Rates

Key Indicators: Graduation Rates of Students of Color and Low Income Students

Target: Improvement in the graduation rates of students of color and low-income students, increasing the regional four-year graduation rate to 83% by 2030.

Strategic Education Priorities	Early Childhood Success and Kindergarten Readiness	Strategies	
		Evidence-based Home Visiting Programming	
		High Quality Pre-K Experiences	
		Indicators	
		# and % of Children Showing Improvements and/or On-track Development as Indicated By a Valid, Reliable, and Evidence-based Assessment Tool (e.g. Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ))	
	# and % of Children Assessed As Kindergarten Ready By a Valid, Reliable, and Evidence-based Assessment Tool		
	Early Grade Reading Achievement	Strategies	
		In-classroom Literacy Coaching, Professional Development, and Resources to Support Literacy	
		Opportunities for Families to Engage in Their Child’s Education and the Development of Their Child’s Literacy Skills	
		Volunteer Reading Buddies to Support and Encourage Reading	
		Evidence-based Interventions and Supports to Offset Summer Slide	
		Indicators	
	# and % of Children Assessed As Reading Proficiently By a Valid, Reliable, and Evidence-based Assessment Tool		
	# and % of Children Assessed As Reading Proficiently At the End of Third Grade As Measured By a State Standardized Test		
	Social Emotional Wellbeing	Strategies	
Mentoring Supports for At-risk and Vulnerable Students, Especially During Times of Transition			
Evidence-based Social Emotional Supports for Students and Their Families			
Indicators			
# and % of Parents, Family Members, or Guardians Served That Demonstrate Improved Family Functioning As Measured By a Valid, Reliable, and Evidence-based Assessment Tool (e.g. Family Empowerment Scale)			
# and % of Children and Youth Served that Demonstrate Improved Academic Performance, Increased Engagement in School Activities, Reduction in Office Disciplinary Referrals and Episodes of Disciplinary Out of School Time, Reduced Truancy, Reduced Absences and/or Improved Social Emotional Competence As Measured By a Valid, Reliable, and Evidence-based Assessment Tool			

UWBCKR has a special interest in equity and the reduction of economic and racial disparities in systems and outcomes. Therefore, programmatic elements that intentionally address these issues are encouraged, including but not limited to:

- Anti-bias training and assessment
- Inclusive supports (e.g. multi-lingual service provision or the use of non-traditional communication methods; differentiated and adaptive practices for children)
- Programming in high-need areas
- Diversified practices for differentiating learning, policies for disciplinary action, academic supports etc. for children varying in learning styles and abilities

**Annual Demographic Data to Be Collected By All Funded Partner Agencies and Programs*

Population(s) of Interest: Low-Income Children and Families and Children and Families of Color

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Baseline Data

Overall 2016 Four Year Graduation Rates:	Kalamazoo County → 75% (all students) ↓ Battle Creek → 85% (all students) ↑
Economic Disparity in Graduation Rates:	Kalamazoo County → Low Income: 60% ↓ Above 185% Poverty: 85% ↓ Battle Creek → Low Income: 74% ↑ Above 185% Poverty: 91% ↑
Racial Disparity in Graduation Rates	Kalamazoo County → African American: 58% ↔ White: 81% ↓ Battle Creek → African American 71% ↔ White: 90% ↑

Source: MiSchoolData, 2014, 2017

Number of Asian & Hispanic students is not high enough to be identified in local data sources.

Rationale

Few jobs can provide family-sustaining employment without some form of training or post-secondary education. Far too many students, in particular low income and students of color, fail to finish their high school education, thereby limiting their future education and employment options.

Early warning signs that indicate increased likelihood of dropping out (attendance, behavioral challenges, and grades in core courses) emerge as early as elementary school. The effects of poverty can make it harder for students to attend school regularly, to focus in school, to display the appropriate behaviors, and complete their schoolwork. Absent effective interventions, at-risk students may face overwhelming challenges that they are unable to successfully navigate by themselves, leading to increased likelihood for dropping out.

This has profound implications not only for the individual students, but also for the community. Dropouts are more likely to require public assistance, more likely to commit a crime, and less likely to have purchasing power to support economic growth. (National Center for Education Statistics) If high school dropout rates were reduced by half, graduates in the United States would likely have seen 4.1 billion in combined additional earnings in the average year, spent an additional 2.8 billion and invested an additional 1.1 billion each year, and boosted tax revenue by \$536 million each year (National Alliance for Education, 2010).

The conditions for successful graduation, however, do not begin in high school. The cumulative educational experiences beginning from birth have a profound impact on educational outcomes. Consequently, putting resources into early interventions is necessary to ensure that students have the support they need to be successful in school and eventually graduate. The indicators above represent interventions that are effective at improving school success.

Research

Early interventions and supports are critical to ensure that students have the foundation for success in school.

- Evidence based programming that supports the home environment and high quality preschool programming have been shown to improve outcomes for children at-risk of dropping out of high school. In one study, participants that received quality early childhood supports obtained 0.87 more years of education, were 3.82 times more likely to have attended some college, and were 2.69 times more likely to have obtained skilled employment compared to their control counterparts.
Pubello, E., et al. (2010). Early Educational Intervention, Early Cumulative Risk, and the Early Home Environment as Predictors of Young Adult Outcomes within a High-Risk Sample. Child Development, 81 (1) 410-426.
- Students that are unable to read by the end of third grade are four to six times more likely to drop out of high school (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010). Findings from 18 studies published between 1995-2005 revealed positive outcomes for students participating in extensive early grade reading interventions. Early interventions were found to be more effective compared to later interventions.
Wanzek, J. & Vaughn, S. (2007). Research based implications from extensive early reading interventions. School Psychology Review, 36:4 pp. 541-56.1
- High quality social emotional supports can be extremely impactful on student achievement. Research indicates that students that received high quality social emotional supports have grade point averages that are 11 percent higher than their peers (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Mentoring is a powerful strategy that can have an impact on student outcomes. A study examined the impact of mentoring on the academic achievement of at-risk youth involved in Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Academic achievement tests were individually administered to 12 boys in the treatment group (i.e., had a mentor) and 13 boys in a control group (i.e., were on a waiting list to receive a mentor) pre- and post-test over a nine month period. Results indicated that boys in the treatment group made significantly higher academic gains than the control group, even after controlling for ability.
Zins, J., Weissberg, R., Wang, M., & Walberg, H. (2004) Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning: What Does the Research Say?
Thompson, Lynn & Kelly-Vance, Lisa. (2001). The impact of mentoring on academic achievement of at-risk youth. Children and Youth Services Review, 23 (3) pp.227-242.

